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NSC BRIEFING

19 June 1957

I. On 18 ~~JUNE~~ President Gronchi asked Christian Democratic (CD) secretary general Fanfani to form coalition government.

A. Senate president Merzagora had given up "exploratory mission" when Christian Democrats and Liberals said they would negotiate only with a premier-designate.

II. Fanfani, now 49, served in De Gasperi and Pella gov'ts in

A. He is ambitious, able, strong-man/-CD majority faction, basically would like one-party gov't.

1. Tried unsuccessfully to form one in 1954.

B. Visited US in '56 to observe national conventions.

III. He faces serious difficulties in trying to end seven-week crisis.

A. The three minor parties--Democratic Socialists, Republicans, Liberals--whose support is necessary, are divided on question of participation.

B. If they agree to join, the new government will face same difficulties as Segni cabinet.

1. Democratic Socialists and Republicans are at loggerheads with Liberals on socio-economic issues

2. In addition, the small parties will probably make exorbitant demands for cabinet posts.

C. But the minor parties may go along with Fanfani to avoid fall elections, having experienced losses in recent local elections.